

# **2017 Massachusetts Community Transportation Coordination Conference**

## **Volunteer Transportation Programs: Variations on a Theme**

### **Presenters**

- Annie Kirsch, Mystic Valley Elder Services
- Mark Byrne, FriendshipWorks
- Kerri Ann Tester, TRIPPS
- Roger Medeiros, volunteer driver with Road to Recovery

### **Facilitator**

- Jenna Henning, MassMobility

### **Mystic Valley Elder Service, TRIP Program – Annie Kirsch**

- Provide services to older adults who remain in homes and communities and cannot drive themselves
- Allows people to ride with someone they know
- Helping individuals without transportation get to places where they need (medical appointments, grocery store) and want (social engagements) to go
- Based on program in Riverside, California
- Short application process to determine eligibility
- 150 miles a month limit for volunteer driver reimbursement
- Driver does not have to live in community they're serving
- Not taxable income for driver
- No liability to agency because the drivers and volunteers are individuals not employed by the organization
- To date volunteers have driven around 200,000miles!

### **Friendship Works, Medical Escort Program - Mark Byrne**

- Founded in 1984, FriendshipWorks has served elders for over 30 years
- The Medical Escort program that goes beyond transportation, providing caring volunteers who give both emotional support and door-through-door physical assistance at the level an elder needs
- Helps individuals travel home after hospital procedures
- Provides a service that the RIDE doesn't. Accompanies people to appointments
- 45% of their people would not be able to go to appointments without FriendshipWorks because they need physical and/or emotional support
- The program is free
- Use volunteers for their services
- Volunteers make their own schedules

### **TRIPPS – Keri Ann Tester**

- Offers transportation resources and information guide on local travel options in greater Boston as well as individual, personalized support to residents of Brookline and Newton
- Grant funded

- Goal is to connect seniors to community
- Volunteers meet every other week
- Volunteers create transportation resources and info guide
- Outreach education and training
- Advocacy- help engage in service providers
- Has a business account with Lyft to provide elders in Brookline with same day service
- Peer mentoring program allows older adults who use public transportation and others services to train their peers
- Hired a community outreach coordinator to reach isolated seniors and build relationships to help provide these isolated seniors with transportation services

### **Road to Recovery Volunteer Driver – Roger**

- Provides rides to cancer patients through volunteer drivers who donate their time
- In 1981 the American Cancer Society Road to Recovery was established
- To book a ride: call dispatch, the information about the appointment (Date, Location, Time, Length of Appointment, Driving Distance) is put into a computer system and matched with a volunteer who has availability based on the profile
- Drivers- Donates his or her time, own vehicle and pays for your own gas
- Patient pays parking (40% of the time driver will pay)
- Roger lost his wife to cancer in 2007. Roger is retired and enjoys driving, so he decided to donate his time to driving for Road to Recovery (in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island)
- Driving distance averages per year: Lowest - 8,000 miles; Highest - 13,000 miles
- Trip number averages a week: Averages 2 trips a week, have had as many as 8
- Challenges – the logistics of measuring time is a big challenge (How long is the patient going to be in their treatment or appointment? Sometimes much shorter or longer than scheduled. How long will the trip take? Factoring in traffic and weather conditions); sometimes the rider does not speak English as their first language creating a linguistic barrier
- Encourages the American Cancer Society to reach out to senior retirees for transporting patients and for people to give back

### **Q&A**

- Questions directed at TRIPPS program
  - How to inform the most people about offerings? Website, in the process of updating transportation tool kit, and may create a pod cast – focusing on online expansion
  - How often do you update or change the information about travel options?
    - Update information on website as often as possible and update print documents twice a year
  - Ideas for out there don't have these programs? TRIPPS will document solutions and share with those who ask
- Volunteer qualifications to all panelists?
  - Annie – doesn't get involved personally with volunteer drivers- encourages individuals to go with someone they know and trust; no CORI
  - Roger - Driver background check and CORI
  - Mark - Fill out application, interview, CORI, references and require training
  - Kerri - Application interview and CORI background check, orientation and a meeting every two weeks
- Insurance and Liability?

- Roger has his own liability insurance through his automobile's insurance provider
  - Kerri Ann encourage drivers to let insurance companies know that you are a volunteer driver
- What is keeping you engaged Roger? He enjoys driving, people, and loves to talk!
- Question directed at FriendshipWorks
  - Where is your funding coming from? Only 20 people on staff; Organization receives funding through grants, supported by individual and foundation support